



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/528,279

08/18/2005

Jiri Babej

67562.21

2952

58785 7590 10/16/2009
HUNTON & WILLIAMS/NEW YORK
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPT.
1900 K STREET, N.W.
SUITE 1200
WASHINGTON, DC 20006-1109

EXAMINER

REESE, DAVID C

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3677

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

10/16/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/528,279	Applicant(s) BABEJ ET AL.	
	Examiner DAVID C. REESE	Art Unit 3677	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 June 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-8, 12, 13, 34 and 35 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 9-11, 14-33, 36 and 37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 3677

DETAILED ACTION

THIS FINAL ACTION IS RESPONSIVE TO THE AMENDMENT FILED 2/18/2009.

- Claims 1-8, 12-13, and 34-35 are withdrawn.
- Claims 1-37 are pending.

Election/Restrictions

[1] Claims 1-8 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely did not traverse the restriction (election) requirement in the reply filed on 6/29/2009; so therefore, the election is treated as an election without traverse.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

[2] Applicant has addressed all rejections under 35 USC § 112 to the Claims in the amendment filed 2/18/2009. Accordingly, the Examiner has withdrawn the 35 USC § 112 rejections.

Claim Objections

[3] Claim 30 recites the limitation "the electrical terminal device" in the instant claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

[4] The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary

Art Unit: 3677

skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

[5] Claims 9-11, 14-33, and 36-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE 196090252 C1, in view of Mueller, US-7,160,047.

Although the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth 35 U.S.C. 102, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a designer having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains, the invention is not patentable.

As for Claim 9, DE 196090252 C1 teaches of a hollow fastener element [for the electrically conductive attachment of an electrical terminal device (10) to a sheet metal part]*, wherein the hollow fastener element (3) has a head part (31') and a tubular rivet section (31), with the rivet section (31) merging via a contact surface (81) for the sheet metal part into the head part (31'), wherein said head part (31') has an end face remote from said tubular rivet section (31), wherein the hollow fastener element has a bore, at a point at which a thread is to be formed by screwing-in a thread cutting or thread forming screw (see fig. 4, the bore 49 ready for insertion of cutting screw of thread) and wherein a mount (33) for the rotationally secure attachment of the electrical connection device (10) to the fastener element is provided at the end face of said head part (31').

Examiner's note:* the above statement in brackets is an example of intended use, limitations that fail to further define the structure of the claimed invention. Since the prior art of DE 196090252 is capable of being used to attach an electric device to a sheet metal part, the

Art Unit: 3677

examiner maintains that the prior art remains anticipatory in the instant case. The current claim is solely directed to that of the subcombination of the fastener. It has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

The difference between the claim and DE 196090252 is that DE 196090252 does not expressly state of features at the contact surface and/or rivet section providing security against rotation. Muller discloses a fastener similar to that of DE 196090252. In addition, Muller further teaches of features (38) providing a security against rotation so as to accomplish the same task. Therefore, at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the disclosures of DE 196090252 and Muller before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the functional element taught by DE 196090252 to comprise anti-rotational features as in Muller, in order to prevent the functional element from rotation once joined to the sheet metal part.

Re: Claim 10, wherein the mount (33) is formed by at least one projection (33) projecting beyond the end face of the fastener element.

Re: Claim 11, wherein the fastener element (3) is executed with two projections which are formed by two lugs (33) having a spacing from one another which are arranged to the side of the bore of the hollow fastener element.

Re: Claim 14, wherein the mount (33) is formed by a recess in the end face of a fastener element which merges into one or more radially extending grooves.

Art Unit: 3677

Re: Claim 15, wherein a tubular guide section (38) is arranged concentric to the tubular rivet section (31) and radially inside the latter, with a ring gap (between 38 and 31) being provided between the guide section (38) and the rivet section (31) and with the guide section projecting beyond the free end of the rivet section.

Re: Claim 16, wherein the free end of the wall of the tubular rivet section (31) is rounded when viewed in an axial section plane both at the radially outer side and also at the radially inner side.

Re: Claim 17, wherein the ring gap has a radial dimension in the range between 0 mm and approximately 3 mm.

Re: Claim 18, wherein the ring gap finishes at an axial spacing before the contact surface (31) at the rivet section side of the contact surface (31).

Re: Claim 19, wherein the guide section (38) is formed as a piercing section and has a circular cutting edge at its end remote from the contact surface (31).

Re: Claim 20, DE196090252 as modified by Muller teaches wherein features (38) providing security against rotation are disposed at least one of in the region of the contact surface (31): the rivet section and the jacket surface of the head part adjacent to the contact surface.

Re: Claim 21, Muller teaches wherein features (38) providing security against rotation are formed by at least one of noses and grooves.

Re: Claim 22, DE196090252 as modified by Muller teaches wherein noses providing security against rotation are provided and are present in raised form at the contact surface (81) and at the rivet section (31) in the region of the transition from the contact surface to the rivet section.

Art Unit: 3677

Re: Claim 23, DE196090252 as modified by Muller teaches wherein said noses providing security against rotation extend in the radial direction at the contact surface (81) and in the axial direction at the rivet section (31).

Re: Claim 24, Muller teaches said features (38) providing security against rotation comprise noses and have one of a generally rounded shape and side flanks which lie in planes extending in the longitudinal direction of the element.

Re: Claim 25, the hollow fastener element has a hollow cylindrical region where the thread forming or cutting screw forms or cuts a thread cylinder said hollow cylindrical region being one of which is provided in the head part (31'), provided or in the guide section (38) and provided or at least partly in the head part (31') and in the guide section (38).

Re: claim 26, wherein said thread cylinder ends in the axial direction approximately at a position where said the gap ends.

Re: Claim 27, wherein said projection is formed by at least one lug and the or each lug (33) has a flank, which, on the attachment of a cable shoe, prevents rotation of the latter about the longitudinal axis of the functional element (3).

Re: Claim 28, wherein, at the position of the or each lug (33) the jacket surface of the head part (31') has a corresponding recess which, on the attachment of the functional element to a sheet metal part (8), serves as a security against rotation.

Re: Claim 29, wherein said rivet section (31) is a piercing and riveting section.

As for Claim 30, DE 196090252 C1 teaches of a component assembly consisting of a sheet metal part (8) and a hollow fastener element (3) attached to it via a rivet connection,

Art Unit: 3677

wherein the fastener element has a smooth cylinder bore for receiving a thread forming or cutting screw (see fig. 4, the bore 49 ready for insertion of cutting screw of thread) and wherein the fastener element has an end face remote from the rivet connection and a mount (33) at the end face remote from the rivet connection for the rotationally secure attachment of the electrical terminal device (10).

The difference between the claim and DE 196090252 is that DE 196090252 does not expressly state that wherein the fastener element is rotationally fixedly secured to the sheet metal part by means of features providing security against rotation and the fastener element and the sheet metal part are jointly coated with an electrically non-conductive or poorly conductive protective coating (120) and an electrically conductive path is provided between the fastener element and the sheet metal part at least at one of in the region of the rivet connection and at the features providing security against rotation. First, with respect to the former limitation above, Muller discloses a fastener similar to that of DE 196090252. In addition, Muller further teaches of features (38) providing a security against rotation so as to accomplish the same task. Therefore, at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the disclosures of DE 196090252 and Muller before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the functional element taught by DE 196090252 to comprise anti-rotational features as in Muller, in order to prevent the functional element from rotation once joined to the sheet metal part.

Second, with respect to the latter limitation above, in addition, Mueller further teaches of providing the fastener assembly with a protective coating such as a paint layer (see col. 3, lines 8-15 and col. 8 lines 1-10). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having

Art Unit: 3677

the disclosures of DE 196090252 and Mueller before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the fastening assembly of DE 196090252 to possess a protective coating as in Mueller. One would have been motivated to make such a combination because the use of such a coating, as taught by Mueller, are known in the art of fasteners for their protection, corrosion resistance, resistance to scratching etc, characteristics.

Re: Claim 31, wherein a thread cutting or forming screw is screwed into the hollow fastener element (3) and holds the electrical connection device at the fastener element (3) in the manner secure against rotation.

Re: Claim 32, wherein the mount (33) is formed by at least one projection (33) projecting beyond the end face of the fastener element.

Re: Claim 33, wherein the fastener element is executed with two projections (33) which are formed by two lugs having a spacing from one another which are disposed to the side of the hole of the hollow fastener element.

Re: Claim 36, wherein said mount (33) is formed by a recess in the end face of the fastener element which merges into one or more radially extending grooves.

Re: Claim 37, wherein said free end wall of the rivet section has one of a semi-circular shape and a shape resembling an arrow-tip (see fig. 3a).

Response to Arguments

[6] Applicant's amendments and arguments filed 2/18/2009 regarding rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant merely states that the examiner's analysis of Brose is incorrect since Brose does not show of an electrical connection per the applicant's submitted English translation of the Brose reference. The

Art Unit: 3677

examiner disagrees with this interpretation. First, with respect to claims 9-11, and 14-29, only the subcombination of the hollow fastener is set forth, and therefore, the prior art of DE 19609252 must only be capable of attaching an electrical terminal device to a sheet metal part..."for the electrically conductive attachment". It has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

Furthermore, with respect to claims 30-33 and 36-37, the assembly is recited as to only include a sheet metal part and a hollow fastener element attached to it via a rivet connection "component assembly consisting of a sheet metal part and a hollow fastener element attached to it via a rivet connection, wherein...". As articulated by the applicant's English translation of Brose, Brose does indeed disclose of a sheet metal part 6, that is attached to a bush (hollow fastener element) 1. The remaining limitations of the claim are considered to be structurally met by Brose, functional, or obvious by the examiner; not positively setting forth further structural limitations attempting to further delineate the structure of the claimed invention.

Art Unit: 3677

Conclusion

[7] **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

[8] Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David C. Reese whose telephone number is (571) 272-7082. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 am-6:00 pm Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Victor Batson can be reached at (571) 272-6987. The fax number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is the following: (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

David Reese

/D. C. R./

Examiner, Art Unit 3677

/Victor Batson/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3677